# THE EFFECTS OF CONTEXTUAL MEANING ASPECTS ON READING COMPREHENSION

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**Abstract**: The study is aimed at investigating the effects of contextual meaning aspects on reading comprehension, and finding out whether or not there is effect of reading proficiency, consists of low and high, on reading comprehension and effect of contextual meaning aspects together with reading proficiency on reading comprehension. It was used experimental design in this study. The data were processed and analyzed according to these steps: giving the treatment, checking and scoring, tabulating, analyzing the data by using statistic technique of ANOVA, and making the conclusion based on the analysis. The number of the sample was 34 students of the students of English education study program of Palangka Raya University. The findings show that example clues considered as the easiest and appositive clues as the most difficult of three context clues in this study. Based on the result, it can be concluded that there is significant effect for contextual meaning aspects and reading proficiency on reading comprehension; however, there is no significant effect of contextual meaning aspects together with reading proficiency on reading comprehension.

**Keywords**:  *effect, contextual meaning aspect, reading comprehension*

Language is a basic means of communication as it is used among the human being to communicate with others. Language is considered as the best way in having relationship with others. People as social beings use the language for interaction, socialization, and communication. One of the languages used most is English.

English is considered as an international tool of communication. It is not hard to find English speaker in this world. They use it whether as first, second, or foreign language. In Indonesia, English is the first foreign language that is learned and practiced. Not only to be learned and practiced, English is also suggested to be mastered. Because of the important of English, English is inserted in the curriculum of junior schools, senior schools, up to the university level. Even, English is found as the subject in some elementary schools now. Then, one of the most important skills is reading.

In the teaching and learning English, there are four skills should be learned and mastered. They are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is clearly stated by the Department of National Education year 2003, one of the most important skills is reading (Depdiknas, 2003).

In globalization era, the competition in all aspects is getting tighter. The basic preparation to face this era is the ability to

receive various information, where most of them are still printed in English. Therefore, everyone should have the good ability or skill in order to be able to read and comprehend English printed text well. Reading is an activity where someone can take many benefits from it, such as to gain the latest information, broaden the knowledge, even someone can be relax by reading. However, to realize it, someone should be able to comprehend the whole text.

To read an English printed text is not easy. The most common problem while reading English printed text is when readers encounter unknown words. Most of them suppose that the best way to find the unknown words meaning is by using dictionary or asking the other people who knows the meaning of the unknown words. No one denies that dictionary is the most helpful thing to find the unknown word meaning, but what if the dictionary that is needed is not available? Of course the readers will be in trouble.

Then, how to solve this problem effectively and efficiently? There are various strategies that can be used and one of the strategies is by using contextual meaning aspects. Here, contextual meaning aspects are considered as context clues.

In reading, to comprehend the text the readers should be able to manage every part of the text, because it is easy to gain the comprehension in reading when the readers are able to organize the text. Cooper (1986:2) noted: "The interaction between the reader and the text is the foundation of comprehension."

However, to comprehend the whole text is not that easy. When a reader encounters unknown words in text, usually he or she will not be able to comprehend the whole text. To solve this problem, there are some skills can be used and one of them is context clues. By using context clues, a reader will be able to guess the meaning of unknown words. Haris & Smith (1986:196) claimed that "the use of context clues can be promoted in class." Moreover, Cooper (1986:166) said that "context clue is available in helping the reader reach an approximate meaning for words even when the words are not in the reader's oral vocabulary."

Referring to the importance of reading comprehension, Bouchard & Spaventa (1984:175) stated that "Reading is very important to the learners of English." Therefore, reading is an extremely complex process that no one can explain it satisfactorily. Every expert gives the different definition about reading. Comprehension is based on the idea that the reader interacts with the text and relates the idea from the text to prior experiences to construct meaning. A part of the process requires the readers to understand how the author organizes his or her ideas. As Cooper (1986:17) stated that "Reading comprehension is thought to be a process whereby the reader constructs meaning by interacting with text."

In comprehending a text, a reader needs to master the technique of reading. Skimming and scanning are two very useful techniques that will help a reader. When the readers are skimming, they should move their eyes quickly over the text or passage. Look at the important parts of the passage: the beginning, the end, the titles and the first sentence in each paragraph (if there is more than one paragraph), which usually contains the

main idea. As Djiwandono (2002:81) stated that skimming is to find the main idea of the text. In addition, when the readers are scanning, they should move their eyes quickly over the passage until they find the specific piece of information which they need. As Djiwandono (2002:81) said that scanning is to find the specific information from the text.

Based on the background of the study above, it is intentionally stated the problem of the study as follows, (1) What is the effect of reading proficiency on reading comprehension? (2) What is the effect of contextual meaning aspects (context clues) on reading comprehension? (3) What is the effect of reading proficiency and contextual meaning aspects (context clues) on reading comprehension?

In this study, it only focuses on the effect of contextual meaning aspects, reading proficiency, and contextual meaning aspects together with reading proficiency on reading comprehension. It is conducted only for the students of English Education Study Program of Palangka Raya University in Academic Year 2005/2006. Therefore, the result of the study cannot be generalized to all of university students.

It is expected that the result of this study would be significant. For the following research, the results can be used as a contribution for other writers. Also, it hopefully give contribution to broaden knowledge about contextual meaning and taken as input in teaching learning reading comprehension, and it gives contribution to the students to improve their skills in learning contextual meaning aspects, especially three kinds of context clues in this study.

## METHOD

In this study, it was used the experimental design that refers to the systematic scheduling of the times when treatments are administered to the subject and data are collected about the performance of the subjects (Arikunto, 2002). This study belongs to randomized post-test only design (Toendan, 2006:228). The data were collected from the students of English Education Study Program of Palangka Raya University in Academic Year 2005/2016. This study was intended to find out the effect of contextual meaning aspects, reading proficiency, and contextual meaning aspects together with reading proficiency on reading comprehension.

In collecting the data, it followed the procedures as follows. Finding out the data of the students registered in 2005, decoding that refers to give code to represent the students' name in order to keep the privacy of the students and to minimize the subjectivity in scoring, giving test to the students, collecting the answer sheets, checking the answer sheets, scoring, and tabulating that refers to classify and put the data in the table.

In this study, it was used test as the instrument. The form of test was multiple-choice question. In conducting try out, the writer had prepared 43 items, but for the need of calculating of reliability and based on the content validity in this study, the writer only took 30 items. From 43 items, the writer eliminated 13 test items. The test items which were eliminated: 1, 2, 8, 11, 17, 20, 23, 25, 27, 29, 32, 33, and 34. Therefore, there are 30 items which will be used to take the data needed in this study.

Before the instrument tested to the sample of this study, the instrument

needed to be tried out. The results of the try out were considered to be important to see whether the instrument can be used to take the data needed.

In analyzing the data, it was through the following procedures. First, giving the treatment, checking the students' answer and gave mark. The data were analyzed by using statistic technique of ANOVA. That was statistical computerized program named SPSS version 12. In this study the writer used two-way ANOVA, and then it took the conclusion based on the statistic result (Usman & Akbar, 1995:159). Furthermore, there was a value level whether to know that data were resulted from normal distribution of population and from homogen variance (Safari, 2004:84-85). Finally, in order to see whether Ho or Ha was accepted, the data calculation of the data could be seen in ANOVA table (Welkowitz, et. al., 1982:251).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings showed that it dealt with findings of the students' reading comprehension without using contextual meaning aspects. The test was done on Saturday, December 9th 2006. It began at 12.30 PM until 13.25 PM. All of the students registered in academic year 2005 should attend the day of data collection. But in fact, the numbers of the participants was 60 students. They were given reading comprehension test that was used as random assignment. The first data collection was to divide the students into two groups, high and low group, by using random assignment. Based on the output, it was found that the average score was

47.17. Therefore, the mean score of the non-contextual meaning is that the minimum score was 22 and the maximum score was 84. It could be concluded that the mean score of non-contextual meaning group categorized as sufficient level.

Meanwhile, the findings dealt with findings of the students' reading proficiency and reading comprehension using contextual meaning aspects. The test was done on Tuesday, December 12th 2006. It began at 13.30 PM until 14.15 PM. The number of the participants was 60. Based on the output, it was found that the average score was 72.67. Therefore, the mean score of the reading proficiency and reading comprehension using contextual meaning aspects that the minimum score was 30 and the maximum score was 100. It could concluded that the mean score of the reading proficiency and reading comprehension using contextual meaning aspects group categorized as skillful level.

To answer the research problem, whether there was a significant difference between reading proficiency and reading comprehension using contextual meaning aspects and reading without it on the students' reading achievement or not, the ANOVA for see effects of reading comprehension and to see the significant difference between the students who reading without contextual meaning and those who reading using contextual meaning aspects on students' reading achievement. For this reasons, the researcher did the following steps. First both data were inserted in the SPSS

program on test for see effect sample. Then, significant level of reading test was determined. The result of calculation or t value could be seen from output. Next, to determine the reading test and contextual meaning test; based on table below, it can be seen that F value of *reading proficiency* is 37.433 and the significant value of *reading proficiency* is .000. Since the significant value of *reading proficiency* is lower than .050, so Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. Based on this fact, it can be said that *reading proficiency* has significant effect on reading comprehension.

## Table 1. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: R_Comprehension

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 20192.048[a] | 5 | 4038.410 | 12.305 | .000 |
| Intercept | 844049.267 | 1 | 844049.267 | 2571.827 | .000 |
| R_Proficiency | 12285.000 | 1 | 12285.000 | 37.433 | .000 |
| Context_Clues | 7784.248 | 2 | 3892.124 | 11.859 | .000 |
| R_Proficiency * Context_Clues | 256.514 | 2 | 128.257 | .391 | .678 |
| Error | 17722.286 | 54 | 328.190 | | |
| Total | 899516.000 | 60 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 37914.333 | 59 | | | |

a. R Squared = .533 (Adjusted R Squared = .489)

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the significant value for *reading proficiency* is .000. It means that *reading proficiency* has effect on students' reading comprehension. The significant value for *context clues* is .000. It means that *context clues* have effect on students' reading comprehension. The significant value for *reading proficiency and context clues* is .678. It means that *reading proficiency and context* clues have no effect on students' reading comprehension.

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that F value of *reading proficiency* is 37.433 and the significant value of *reading proficiency* is .000. Since the significant value of *reading proficiency* is lower than .050, so Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted. Based on this fact, it can be said that *reading proficiency* has significant effect on reading comprehension.

## Table 2. Estimates of Reading Proficiency

**Estimates**

Dependent Variable: R_Comprehension

| R_Proficiency | Mean | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound |
| Low | 109.333 | 2.901 | 103.517 | 115.149 |
| High | 139.333 | 3.953 | 131.408 | 147.259 |

Based on the Table 2, mean value for *low reading proficiency* is 109.333 and mean value for *high reading proficiency* is 139.333. Therefore, it can be said that *high reading proficiency* is better than *lower reading proficiency*. It is because the mean value for *high reading proficiency* is higher than *low reading proficiency*.

Based on the result of data analysis on the ANOVA, it can be concluded that:

1. There is significant effect of reading proficiency on the students' reading comprehension. In reading comprehension test, from 60 students, 21 students belong to high reading proficiency and 39 students belong to low reading proficiency. Even though both groups, low and high groups, have significant effect on reading comprehension, but in fact, high group has better ability in reading comprehension.

2. There is significant effect of context clues on the students' reading comprehension.
   In this study there are three kinds of context clues, they are example, definition, and appositive context clues. For all of the subjects of this study who belong to low and high group, definition context clues is easier than appositive context clues and example context clues is the easiest among three kinds of context clues.

3. There is no significant effect of reading proficiency and context clues on the students' reading comprehension.
   Based on the analysis result, it can be seen that reading proficiency and context clues has no effect on students' reading comprehension.

Based on the profile plot of the study, it shows that:

1. There is significant effect between reading proficiency and students' reading comprehension.

2. There is significant effect between context clues and students' reading comprehension.

3. For all of the samples of this study, who belong to high or low group, example is the easiest context clues and appositive is the most difficult context clues. Sample of this study is the students of English Education Study Program of Palangka Raya University in Academic Year 2005/2016.

4. High group is better than lower group for all three kinds of context clues.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of effect contextual meaning aspects on students' reading comprehension in this research the researcher drew some conclusion into three points as follows: (1) Reading proficiency has significant effect on students' reading comprehension; (2) Contextual meaning aspects (context clues) have significant effect on students' reading comprehension; and (3) Reading proficiency and contextual meaning aspects (context clues) have no significant effect on students' reading comprehension.

To follow the conclusion, it is given some suggestions related to the results of the study. English lecturer should teach the context clues from the easiest up to the most difficult one. Moreover, the lecturer could improve students' ability in contextual meaning aspects (context clues)

by giving more exercises and homework especially for appositive context clues since based on this study it is considered as the most difficult context clues of three. Next, the students should increase their reading ability to improve their skill in defining unfamiliar word(s). Finally, other researchers are recommended to prove the validity of this study; however, it is necessary for the next researchers to conduct further research.

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